

REMARKS
Assistant Administrator Dunn
Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC)
Federal Advisory Committee
May 20, 2020

- Hello, I'm Alex Dunn, the Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. I am pleased to be here with all of you today and thank you for the opportunity to highlight some of our priorities.
- Thank you to the members of PPDC for participating virtually today and especially the 21 new members.
- To all of the PPDC members, we appreciate your time, your valuable input, your service to this committee, and your flexibility to participate virtually. We hope that this virtual meeting will be just as effective as our in-person meetings.
- Thank you to Shannon Jewell, Carla Theriault, and OPP staff for working to hold this meeting virtually.
- I strongly believe that it is important for all of us to embrace these opportunities to come together to share information and listen and learn from each other.
- Now in its 25th year, the PPDC is important to us and is an effective forum to present issues and collect feedback and diverse insights and perspectives on pesticide policies.
- The agenda is packed with great sessions on:
 - OPP's activities in response to COVID-19
 - A discussion of the PPDC's recommendations for how OPP can effectively respond to public health emergencies, how these recommendations have influenced EPA's response to COVID-19, and additional work that can be done to improve future emergency responses
 - Emerging agricultural technologies and how their use leads to risks that differ from those of current agricultural methods
 - An introduction to the methods that OPP uses to perform both human health and ecological risk assessments
 - Updates on various OPP activities; and
 - Finally, a session to discuss the workgroups the current committee would like to undertake.

- My remarks will touch on OCSPP's role in the coronavirus response as well as updates on our other pesticide priorities.

EPA's 50th Anniversary

- First, I am especially happy to be with you in this, the 50th anniversary of EPA. Over the last 50 years, the agency has worked to fulfill its mission of protecting human health and the environment by cleaning up our air, water, and land, providing a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people.

I want to offer a bit of information, on OCSPP's role in the coronavirus response effort. Rick Keigwin will talk more about our response to the coronavirus in the next session.

Coronavirus

- Let me first say how proud I am to work with an incredibly dedicated group of employees at EPA who have been working nonstop to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. They represent the best and brightest of government service and I continue to be impressed with their strong commitment to our mission of protecting human health and the environment during these challenging times.
- I want to stress that EPA is open for business and we are continuing the important and critical work we do during this challenging time.
- Most of our staff is teleworking, and we've activated Continuity of Operations Plans in the majority of our Regional offices across the country.
- We do have a few staff going into the office to carry out essential functions, including our staff who work at our lab at the Environmental Science Center in Ft. Meade, MD.

OCSPP Work on COVID-19

- In terms of the work we're doing on COVID-19, OCSPP staff have been working tirelessly to quickly assess and identify qualified surface disinfectant products Americans can use against COVID-19.
- Since early March, EPA has published weekly updates to our List N: Disinfectants to Use Against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Last week, EPA released a new List N Tool, a web-based app that allows smart phone users and others to quickly identify disinfectant products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2.
- EPA also recently released new guidance and instructions for registrants that expand the types of registration actions eligible for expedited review and inclusion on List N.

- To ensure Americans have access to products for use against coronavirus, EPA has also announced that we will be expediting requests by registrants to add emerging viral pathogen claims to their product labels.
- We are also working to protect consumers from fraudulent products in the market that are making false coronavirus disinfectant claims.

Administrator's Call with Retailers on Fraudulent Disinfectant Claims

- In early April, Administrator Wheeler hosted a conference call with U.S. retailers and third-party marketplace platforms to discuss imposter disinfectant products and those that falsely claim to be effective against the coronavirus.
- EPA blocked shipments of lanyards with plastic cards on them that falsely purported to protect the wearer against the virus that causes COVID-19. In that case, the online retailer [Amazon] worked with EPA to remove the fraudulent product from its online marketplace.
- During the meeting, the Administrator enlisted the help of the retail community to prevent these products from coming to market.
- Through tips, complaints, and research, the agency is learning of the availability of such products marketed with unsubstantiated and potentially dangerous claims of protection against the coronavirus.
- Simply put, offering any product for sale that is not registered with the EPA and that falsely touts anti-viral, antibacterial, disinfectant, sterilizing, or sanitizing effectiveness against the novel coronavirus is illegal, and we will do what we need to do to prevent that from happening.

Registration Review

- Of course, while we've added COVID-19 response efforts to our daily work, we continue to implement the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).
- Section 3(g) of FIFRA requires EPA to review each registered pesticide every 15 years to ensure that each pesticide registration is based on current scientific and other knowledge regarding the pesticide, including its effects on human health and the environment.
- The first round of registration review began in October 2007 and all 725 "cases," encompassing over 1,100 pesticide active ingredients, must be completed by the statutory deadline of October 1, 2022.
- This fiscal year we expect to issue 80 draft risk assessments, 80 proposed interim registration review decision, and 110 interim registration review decisions.

- In fiscal year 2020 our registration review focus will be on rodenticides, pyrethroids, and the neonicotinoids.

Dicamba

- EPA understands that dicamba is a valuable pest control tool.
- In 2018, EPA provided certainty to stakeholders for the next two growing seasons by extending its use while also establishing important **additional** restrictions on the product.
- In considering whether to extend the dicamba registrations beyond the December 20, 2020, expiration date, the Agency will review all information available, including the results of the field studies that the registrants conducted during the 2019 use season.

ESA Draft Biological Evaluations Using Revised Method

- In addition to FIFRA, EPA must also comply with the Endangered Species Act which requires federal agencies to ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out, will not likely jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species, or destroy or adversely modify any critical habitat for those species.
- In March, EPA released the final revised framework, which incorporates high-quality pesticide usage data into the agency's biological evaluation (BE) process for the first time.
- The final revised framework produces a more sustainable process and refined risk assessment approaches that better differentiate species that are likely at risk from pesticide exposure and those that are not.
- In conjunction with the release of the final revised framework, EPA also released for public comment draft BEs for carbaryl and methomyl, which were conducted using the final revised framework.
- EPA is accepting public comments in the Federal Register docket on the carbaryl and methomyl draft evaluations and on the updated revised method until July 2, 2020.
- The next chemicals to be evaluated using the revised method are four herbicides: atrazine, simazine, propazine, and glyphosate.

Pollinators

- EPA has taken an active role in multiple efforts to promote and increase pollinator protection through regulatory actions, voluntary changes to pesticide use by registrants, and research programs aimed at better understanding the factors associated with declining pollinator health.

- EPA is actively increasing awareness in 2020 through a 3-pronged approach consisting of a workshop/conference co-hosted by USDA, a series of webinars, and the renewal of relevant MOUs.
- EPA is working with the states and tribes on pollinator protection plans which are intended to increase communication and cooperation between stakeholders to reduce exposure of bees to pesticides.

Animal Testing-New Approach Methods

- Another important priority for EPA is to continue to advance alternatives to animal testing.
- In support of Administrator Wheeler's 2019 directive that called for the agency to reduce its requests for and funding of mammal studies by 30 percent by 2025, and to eliminate all mammal study requests and funding by 2035, the agency convened a conference in December 2019 to discuss New Approach Methods (NAMs) for achieving reduced animal testing in chemical safety research.
- EPA will develop a workplan to achieve these goals and hold a second NAMs conference this fall.

Biotechnology

- Biotechnology provides important new tools to control agricultural pests and diseases that have not been addressed using existing pesticides.
- The June 2019 Executive Order *Modernizing the Regulatory Framework for Agricultural Biotechnology Products* directs EPA to use existing statutory authority, as appropriate, to exempt low-risk products of agricultural biotechnology from undue regulation to the extent consistent with law and the Executive Order.
- On January 9, 2020, EPA, USDA, and FDA launched a unified [[HYPERLINK "https://usbiotechnologyregulation.mrp.usda.gov/biotechnologygov/home/"](https://usbiotechnologyregulation.mrp.usda.gov/biotechnologygov/home/)] that provides a one-stop-shop for information about the actions the federal government is taking to oversee the development of agricultural biotechnology products. This new website is a key accomplishment under the June 2019 Executive Order.
- Also in early 2020, in response to newer technologies, EPA sent to OMB a proposed rule to exempt certain plant-incorporated protectant products – or PIPs – from regulation under FIFRA and FFDCA due to their low risk, *i.e.*, PIPs that are developed through biotechnology to mimic the low-risk PIPs developed through conventional breeding that are already exempted.

Conclusion

- As you can see, my office has been very active as we address the coronavirus, and work through the registration review process among our other priorities.
- Thank you for the opportunity to highlight some of the important work that OCSPP is focusing on.